United Nations E/CN.17/1999/19

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
27 April 1999

Original: English

Commission on Sustainable Development
Seventh session
19–30 April 1999
Agenda item 9
Other matters

Letter dated 27 April 1999 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward (see annex) the appeal of Jagos Zelenovic, Federal Minister for Development, Science and Environment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, to stop the aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, made on the occasion of 22 April, the International Day of Planet Earth.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

99-12119 (E) 280499

Annex

A P P E A L

TO STOP THE AGGRESSION OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA ON THE OCCASION OF 22 APRIL THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PLANET EARTH

Since 24 March 1999 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been savagely bombing the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia without any international legal basis and any reason at all.

On the occasion of 22 April, the International Day of Planet Earth, we let it be known to you and to all progressive people all over the world that, in addition to unforeseen human losses and destruction, the weeks-long aggression of NATO has already caused an ecological catastrophe, threatening the life of millions of citizens of Yugoslavia, neighbouring countries and Europe.

The bombing is affecting primarily the most vulnerable population groups: infants, children, the sick and the elderly, disabled and unemployed people. The exhaustion, malnutrition and pauperization of the population has also genetic consequences for future generations, even those that have not been born yet. The daily raids and vast destruction have accounted for the ever greater suffering of the population and the number of ailing people.

Since the very first day of the aggression, NATO has targeted all types of civilian institutions: hospitals, schools, faculties, private houses and apartment and administrative buildings, places of worship, cultural and artistic centres, bridges, roads, railroads, mines, power and industrial plants, hotels, sports arenas and recreational grounds. The damage done to civilian facilities is much larger that the damage done to military ones.

National parks at Mt. Kopaonik, Mt. Tara and Mt. Durmitor, natural reservations, cultural monuments and objects of natural and cultural heritage and protected flora and fauna have not been saved from daily bombings, either. No exception has been made even for objects listed as items of world cultural and natural heritage or world biospheric reservations, as well as wetlands of international significance.

In addition to genocide, the NATO aggression is guilty of eco-cide against the environment in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the Balkans and a significant part of Europe. A true ecological catastrophe is taking place in the heart of Europe of unforeseeable temporal or spacial proportions.

Daily bombings of chemical, oil and pharmaceutical

plants by the NATO aggressor in the immediate vicinity of large cities, such as two-million Belgrade, Novi Sad, Pristina, Pancevo, Subotica, Smederevo, Cacak, Krusevac, has released vast quantities of dangerous poisonous substances threatening people, the air, land and all living beings. Dangerous eco-toxicological and toxicological substances (vinylchloridemonomer, chlorine, choric oxides, ammonia, nitric oxides, products of the combustion of oil and oil derivatives and other products of secondary and uncontrolled chemical reactions) have caused the loss of human lives, destroyed or threatened numerous sensitive and rare habitats, polluted freshwater water courses and subterranean waters, while atmospheric pollutants have spread to vast areas and caused a long-term pollution of land and threatened farm and woodland, jeopardizing bio-diversity in an unforeseeable way.

Thousands of citizens of Yugoslavia requested medical assistance in the past days because of the poisoning by poisonous gases released in the bombing of chemical plants in Yugoslavia. This is yet another illustration of the crime against humanity committed by the NATO aggressors. Numerous dangerous consequences are being studied.

The bombing of the NATO aggressor has caused oil spillovers in the Danube (an oil spill 15 km long and 400 m wide), destroying the flora and fauna of the most important European river and threatening the water supply of a large number of people and a number of countries, including the Black Sea.

Exceptionally dangerous are chemical compounds created immediately after bomb and missile explosions and in the fires that burn during the destruction of buildings and woodlands in their environment. Bearing in mind that the NATO aggressor uses also inflammable cluster bombs, vast areas are threatened.

Particularly dangerous is the fact that,in the last days, the NATO aggressors began to fly the A-10 type of aircraft which use depleted uranium ammunition and missiles (banned genocidal weapons affecting all sides in a conflict). According to the results of tests carried out by the British laboratory "Coghill" and the analyses of health organizations carried out after their use in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it has been established that they cause an intensive growth of malignant diseases and leukemia ("Gulf syndrome", leukemia) and anomalie with newly-born babies.

The NATO aggressor does not comply with the basic provisions of international law, such as the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention on the Protection of Cultural Assets in Case of Armed Conflict, Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage etc. The principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment

and Development, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, have been trampled upon, in particular principle 24 which reads: "Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary." and principle 25 which reads: "Peace, development and environment protection are interdependent and indivisible."

Bearing in mind the afore-mentioned and mindful of the consistent policy of peace pursued by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, I call on you that, in accordance with your authority, you urgently take all necessary measures in order to bring about an immediate aggression of NATO and prevent even graver ecological consequences in a broader region of Europe and the Mediterranean. I also call on you to advise other countries participating in the celebration of the World Day of Planet Earth of the contents of this letter.

Prof. Dr. Jagos Zelenovic
FEDERAL MINISTER FOR DEVELOPMENT,
SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT